

What is claimed is:

A method of making an electret, which method comprises:

condensing vapor from an atmosphere of a controlled environment onto a dielectric article to form a condensate thereon; and then

drying the article.

The method of claim 1, wherein the electret exhibits a persistent electric

charge.

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The method of claim 1, wherein the dielectic article comprises a 3. nonconductive polymeric material.

The method of claim 1, wherein the condensate includes a polar liquid. 4.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the controlled environment further comprises a liquid, and the method further comprises:

placing the article in the liquid before condensing the vapor; and

decreasing the pressure on the atmosphere such that at least a portion of the liquid evaporates into the atmosphere

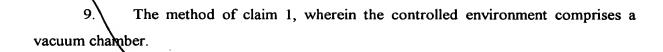
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- 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of condensing the vapor comprises increasing the pressure on the atmosphere such that the vapor condenses on the article.
- The method of claim 1, wherein the step of condensing comprises placing an 25 7. article at a temperature T1 in contact with the vapor, the vapor being at a temperature T2, where T1 is sufficiently less than T2 such that the vapor condenses on the article.
 - 8. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of condensing comprises an adiabatic expansion.

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- 10. The method of claim 4, wherein the polar liquid is an aqueous liquid.
- 11. The method of claim 1, wherein the condensate consists essentially of water.
- 12. The method of claim 1, wherein the condensate is selected from the group consisting of acetone, methanol, ethanol, liquid carbon dioxide, butanol, or a combination thereof.
 - 13. The method of claim 1, wherein the condensate comprises a fluorocarbon.
 - 14. The method of claim 1, wherein the article is nonwoven fibrous web.
- 15. The method of claim 11, wherein the nonwoven fibrous web comprises microfibers.
 - 16. The method of claim 15, wherein the microfibers are melt blown.
- 17. The method of claim 16, wherein the meltblown microfibers comprise polypropylene, poly-(4-methyl-1-pentene) or a combination thereof.

The method of claim 1, wherein the controlled environment further comprises a liquid, and the method further comprises

altering a first property of the environment such that at least a portion of the liquid evaporates into the atmosphere;

altering a second property of the environment such that the vapor condenses on the surface of the article.

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19. The method of claim 18, wherein the first property is selected from the group consisting of pressure, volume or temperature, or a combination thereof, and wherein the second property is selected from the group consisting of pressure, volume or temperature, or a combination thereof.

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- 20. The method of claim 19, wherein the first property comprises pressure and e second property comprises pressure.
- 10 The method of claim 19, wherein the first property comprises volume and the second property comprises volume.
 - 22. The method of claim 1, wherein the electret exhibits persistent electric charge, wherein the dielectric article comprises a nonconductive polymeric material, and wherein the condensate comprises a polar liquid.

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- 23. A filter comprising the electret of claim 16.
- 24. A respirator comprising the filter of claim 23.

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